BODY OF POPE PIUS X. LYING IN STATE IN SAINT PETER'S

STRANGE HISTORY OF CZAR'S NEWLY NAMED CAPITAL OF PETROGRAD

ON a little peninsula where flows the clear and beautiful river Neva, off the Gulf of Finland, stands the "city of the Czars"—St. Petersburg. In the Admiralty Square of that city stands the equestrian statue of Peter the Great, founder of the Russian capital, the name of which Czar Nicholas, in his effort to purge it from its Teutonic appellation has changed from "Sankt Petersburg," as the Muscovites call it, to Petrograd.

Wonderful as it may seem, only two centuries ago the place where now stands one of the world's magnificent cities was nothing more than a dreary, marshy waste, surrounded by forests and lakes. When the severe climate permitted a few lonely Finnish fishermen inhabited that wilderness. However, as soon as October approached with its howling winds and biting frosts they forsook their mud huts and sought shelter in the interior of Finland.

Near its mouth the Neva takes a sharp turn and divides into three or four branches. These, by subsequent reflexion, form a number of islands, large and small. For many years these lands were in the possession of the Swedes. On one island, commanding the entrance to Lake Ladoga, the Swedes maintained a strong fortress, for which the Russians struggled. Peter not only thought the place valuable from a military and commercial point of view, but he also found it personally attractive. It was not until 1702, however, after the fall of Neynschaz, that the Swedes were driven from their fortress. Even before peace was established Peter the Great gave orders to build a city which now bears the name of Petrograd.

The story of the founding of the city has become the source of a thousand legends and epics. One popular description represents Peter as snatching a halberd from one of his soldiers, cutting two strips of turf and laying them crosswise, saying: "Here there shall be a city." As foundation stones were lacking, sods had to take their place. Then dropping the halberd, he seized a spade and began the first embankment. At that moment a huge eagle was seen hovering over the head of the Czar. A shot from a musket brought it down. Peter took the wounded bird, set it on his wrist and departed in his boat to inspect the neighborhood.

The construction and the maintenance of the city mark a continuous struggle and conquest of nature. The soil is a marsh so deep and spongy that a solid foundation in many places is attained only by a subterranean scaffolding of piles. The highest point of the city is not more than fifteen feet above the sea level.

But the greatest enemy of the city is the terrible inundation to which it is subjected ever so often. The western winds from the Gulf of Finland drive the waters down the Neva, making a funnel of it, and flood the city from end to end. A legend has it that after Peter chose the site of his new capital he saw a white ring high up on the trunk of a tree. Turning to a Finnish fisherman Peter asked the meaning of it.

"That," replied the fisherman, "is the spot to which the floods of the Neva reached last year."

"You're mad," shouted Peter. "It can't be. It is impossible." It was not long, though, before Peter was convinced of the truthfulness of the fisherman's statement. In 1712 a flood swept the newly laid city, during which Peter almost lost his life. Thousands perished in the inundation, while the whole city was almost destroyed. But Peter was undismayed by the misfortune.

Historians claim that more than 100,000 men perished during the first six months of the construction of St. Petersburg. The lack of implements, the lack of food, combined with the severity of the climate, caused the death of thousands of Swedish prisoners who were employed in the building work. Wheelbarrows were a thing unknown. Spades and shovels were not used. The soil was dug with sticks of wood and carried away in the ends of the workers' shirts or on pieces of matting.

To attract all the masons of the empire it was forbidden on pain of exile and confiscation of goods to construct stone houses anywhere but at St. Petersburg. Every proprietor owning 500 serfs was obliged to put up a stone dwelling of two stories. Those who had lesser numbers clubbed together and built one stone building among them.

As white stones were scarce in those marshy wastes, every boat that sought harbor in the Neva had to bring a certain number of white stones. Also every wagon that reached the city was forced to do likewise. In spite of disease and the high mortality among the men, in spite of the floods, which in the first year covered nearly the whole place, the work went on with remarkable rapidity. At one time, becoming aware of the dreadful mortality among his workers, Peter wrote to Governor-General Romadonofsky to send him 2,000 thieves and criminals who were to be sent to Siberia. Regardless of his high station in life and oblivious of the many dangers, Peter, mingling with the criminals and prisoners, personally superintended the construction of the city that was to introduce Russia to western Europe.

St. Petersburg was the apple of Peter's eye. It was his "paradise," as he often called it in his letters. The rigorous manner with which he pursued the work caused considerable alarm among the Swedes and Finns. They scented danger. The quickly growing city with its ring of fortifications filled the natives with terror. When Charles XII., however, was informed of the foundation of the new city he nonchalantly remarked: "Let the Czar tire himself with founding new towns; we will keep for ourselves the honor of taking them later."

In its infancy, true to Charles's comment, St. Petersburg was constantly menaced by the Swedes. On several occasions it was in great danger from their attacks, both by land and sea. In 1703 it was threatened from the side of Finland by Gen. Kronhojort, who was encamped with a large force, while Vice-Admiral Nummers's ships lay at anchor at the mouth of the Neva. The severity of the climate for once came to Peter's rescue. Nummers had to withdraw, while Peter led a strong force against Gen. Kronhojort and defeated him.

The founding of Petrograd, however, meant more to Peter than the acquisition of new territory. His studies and travels abroad had brought him to a full realization of the uncivilized state of his country. To Peter the founding of the city meant a window upon western Europe, through which the European culture might filter through upon Russia.

To the Russian Empire the founding of the new capital meant a new epoch in the history of its life. It meant shaking off Mongolian influence. A humorous incident is related of Peter's desire to change the habits and customs of the people. A legend has it that he ordered all the peasants to shave off their heavy whiskers and modernize their attire. The Russians, who were used to bushy beards, did not take kindly to the edict, but obeyed it. He forced his nobles to forsake their snug homes in Moscow and Novgorod and take up residence in St. Petersburg.

The hatred which the nobles felt for St. Petersburg may be illustrated by the comment of Princess Mary, a half-sister of Peter the Great:

"Petersburg will not endure after our time; may it remain a desert."

Regardless of the many obstacles the city was making wonderful progress. In 1714 Peter proclaimed the city the capital of Russia and, as was the custom of European rulers, adopted the title of Emperor. At that time the city had nearly 40,000 large and small buildings. Four years later the Government of the empire was transferred to St. Petersburg, while 34,000 laborers were sent from the interior of Russia to construct the administration buildings.

As the city assumed more definite proportions, and with the completion of the many churches and palaces, Peter turned his attention to internal reforms. He founded the *Petersburg Gazette*, the first public organ in the empire. He gathered about him his ignorant nobles, formed salons, and while wine and good cheer flowed in abundance tried to interest them in the affairs of western Europe.

Peculiar as it may seem, the Russian poets never called the city anything but Petrograd. Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrassov and others always spoke of it by that name. It was Pushkin who, bemoaning the fate of the ancient capital, Moscow, wrote:

"Before the new capital, Petrograd, Moscow bows her head as an imperial widow bows before a young Czarina."

To-day brilliant boulevards stretch themselves majestically along the dreary wastes of other years. Marble palaces and gilded churches have replaced the mud huts of fishermen and rear their glittering spires to the heavens, proclaiming man's power over nature.

EXAMPLES OF THE PATRIOTIC POSTCARDS RELATING TO THE WAR DESIGNED BY THE FRENCH CARTOONISTS

"There they are, the two who would devour Europe."

"And now we must finish with this foul beast of a Hohenzollern."

The Nightmare of Europe.